

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Golden Gate Audubon's Anthony DeCicco (center) and Mark Welther accepting the NAAEE award for GGA's Eco-Education Programs from NAAEE Board President Karen Hollweg.

Eco-Education Programs Garner Prestigious Award

On October 10, 2009, Executive Director Mark Welther and Eco-Education Programs Manager Anthony DeCicco had the honor of receiving the 2009 Outstanding Service to Environmental Education at the Regional Level Award from the North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE) on behalf of Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Education Programs. Both Mark and Anthony attended the award reception in Portland, Oregon, part of NAAEE's five-day conference that brought together environmental educators from across the continent to share the latest research, provide professional development, and advance the field.

The NAAEE, established in 1971, seeks to promote professional excellence in nonformal organizations, K-12 classrooms, universities, government agencies, and corporate settings throughout North America and in over 55 other countries. The NAAEE is the premier national environmental education network and sets the standard for best practices in the field.

The award recognizes the important work of Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Education Programs. In his introduction of the Eco-Education Programs, NAAEE Executive Director Brian Day shared with the conference attendees, "A unique aspect of the program is the inclusion of weekend family field trips. We can all learn

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Creating a New National Park

Golden Gate Audubon has joined with the Bay Area conservation community to urge the city of San Francisco to add to one of "America's best ideas" by restoring the natural habitat at the Sharp Park golf course in Pacifica and creating a new national park unit there. The site is home to two federally listed species, the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake and the threatened Red-legged Frog. Both are put at risk by operations at the golf course. If San Francisco continues to operate the golf course, it must invest millions of dollars for repairs and improvements and will have to ensure adequate protections for the listed species there.

Last May, Golden Gate Audubon and other environmental groups supported San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi's ordinance directing the Recreation and Parks Department to initiate a restoration planning process for Sharp Park. The report, slated for release after this issue of *The Gull* went to press, includes a proposed plan, schedule, and budget to restore habitat at Sharp Park for the San Francisco Garter Snake and the Red-legged Frog. The next step is for the city's plan to be debated in public forums and the media throughout San Francisco.

Golden Gate Audubon and others in the conservation community are urging the city to fully restore the wetlands and other natural features of the park and to consider transferring the

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ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

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Neighborhood Wildlife Needs You

What do Western Snowy Plovers of San Francisco's Ocean Beach, California Least Terns of the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge, and Western Burrowing Owls of Berkeley's Cesar Chavez Park have in common? First of all, they are all threatened or endangered species trying to make a living in our cities. More than that, they need our help to survive. All of these birds have Golden Gate Audubon volunteer conservation committees working every day on their behalf.

In this column, we have often spoken about our award-winning Eco-Education Programs and our big-ticket conservation projects such as the coalition to protect raptors at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area. But GGA's unsung heroes are the small armies of volunteers on both sides of the bay: many get up at dawn and count neighborhood birds; others conduct docent trainings, attend meetings, write letters, and generally speak out for bird and wildlife protection. Golden Gate Audubon was founded as a volunteer-run grassroots organization 92 years ago, and we are still largely effective because of our incredible volunteers. Currently, we have three active volunteer conservation committees (CCs), the San Francisco CC, the East Bay CC, and the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR).

As you are undoubtedly aware, Golden Gate Audubon is the largest California chapter of the National Audubon Society, one of 48 chapters statewide. But why have chapters? The reason is that the National Audubon Society is focused on national and statewide wildlife issues and cannot keep up with the hundreds of local challenges that regularly occur in our communities. When developers campaign for a bridge through bird habitat in San Francisco's Yosemite Slough, when a bike path is proposed through the Emeryville Crescent, or when a Veteran Administration's hospital complex is planned to overlap with the Alameda Wildlife Refuge, it is our volunteers who attend city council hearings, write letters to the editor, and generally "bird-dog" local decision makers to ensure that development doesn't steamroll birds, wildlife, and habitat.

One such volunteer is Leora Feeney. She helped found FAWR in 1996 and has been tirelessly monitoring and advocating for the well-being of Alameda's Least Terns ever since. Recently, Christy Smith of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service told me that she thinks of Leora as the godmother of the terns and credits her with keeping the USFWS and the U.S. Navy focused on protecting these federally endangered birds. Now more than ever, when the navy is making serious plans to turn the land over to the Veteran's Administration for development, Leora and FAWR are a force to be reckoned with.

I bring this up because, when you check out Conservation Corner on the facing page, you will see that much more vital work is yet to be done in your neighborhood than our staff can do alone. We could not have the impact we do without the enthusiastic volunteers who are willing to give their time and talent to advocate for the resident and migrant birds around us. These volunteers also bring to public attention important local matters that Golden Gate Audubon staff would not otherwise know about.

All our conservation committees can use more members, so please join today. It's easy—just attend an upcoming meeting (see our website for details). The EBCC (chaired by Phil Price) meets the first Tuesday of each month. The SFCC (chaired by Noreen Weeden) meets the first Wednesday. And the FAWR Committee (cochaired by Leora Feeney and Linda Vallee) meets the third Monday. You will meet some of the most interesting, inspiring, and committed folks you can imagine and will also find work that really makes a difference.

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

The Gull Online—Now in Color

Each issue of *The Gull* can be found on our website, where it can be downloaded as a PDF. Now, all the photographs in each newsletter are in full color. Check it out by going to our newly redesigned website and clicking on "The Gull."



OIL SPILL UNDERSCORES FRAGILITY OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY AND ITS WILDLIFE

On October 30, a tanker named the *Dubai Star* spilled as much as 800 gallons of bunker oil into the San Francisco Bay, about 2.5 miles south of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge. By the next day, observers began finding oiled wildlife, primarily along the East Bay shoreline in southern Alameda and on Bay Farm Island.

As a partner in the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN), Golden Gate Audubon initiated its oil spill response protocol, calling together the members of its Emergency Response Team, gathering all available information on the spill, and preparing to deploy volunteers if called upon by OWCN. During the first several days of the spill, Golden Gate Audubon members visited shorelines to look for and report oiled wildlife.

By November 3, OWCN reported that its teams had found 36 oiled birds alive and 11 dead birds. Beach cleanup crews were also hard at work removing the tar balls and patties that were forming at several locations on the East Bay shoreline.

In 2007 the *Cosco Busan* released approximately 53,000 gallons of bunker oil into the bay, resulting in harm to more than 2,940 birds. By comparison, the *Dubai Star* spill was relatively small, but the impact to birds, fish, and crustaceans exposed to the oil is significant. The spill reminds us of the many continuing risks to the ecology of San Francisco Bay.

More information about the *Dubai Star* spill is available at www.owcn.org.

WESTERN SNOWY PLOVERS RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO

The Western Snowy Plovers are in their winter habitats in San Francisco at Crissy Field in the Presidio and at Ocean Beach. Take time to visit both sites and see the plovers and other shorebirds along San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area recently installed informational signage at Crissy Field about rising sea levels and



New interpretive signage at Crissy Field, San Francisco.

the potential impact on the plovers' Crissy Field habitat. At Ocean Beach, Golden Gate Audubon has been working with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and city agencies on habitat enhancement.

BERKELEY POISED TO REDUCE IMPACTS FROM DOGS ON WILDLIFE IN PARKS

Plenty of people in the Bay Area, including Golden Gate Audubon members, love dogs. But we've all seen dog owners let their dogs roam where they shouldn't, sometimes with disastrous consequences for birds and other wildlife. The Berkeley Humane Commission has a great relationship with dog owners and dog groups, and is also

concerned about the welfare of wildlife. The commission has agreed to assemble a subcommittee to come up with recommendations on how to reduce the harm done by dogs in Berkeley parks. (We hope this can serve as a model for other East Bay cities.) Recommendations might include what kinds of signs to install and where; when and where to request police enforcement of leash laws; and the use of fencing or other infrastructure.

But the commission will take on this task only if we help. We need a couple Golden Gate Audubon members who are willing to work with the subcommittee on dog issues. This means attending one evening

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 4



Jordan Hall

Golden Gate Audubon Welcomes New Staff Member

We are pleased to announce that Rue Mapp has joined GGA as our new Development Assistant. Rue is a successful entrepreneur who holds a BA in the history of art from the University of California, Berkeley. A native of Oakland, she is passionate about the local environment and using the Internet to connect with people who share her outdoor interests. Early this year, she founded Outdoor Afro, a website community designed to encourage diverse outdoor participation through social media. Rue will coordinate our May 2010 Bird-A-Thon and other fundraising efforts.

meeting per month for a few months, plus doing some work before and after meetings to come up with suggestions and keep the East Bay Conservation Committee in the loop. Ideally, at least one volunteer will be a dog owner, but this is not a requirement. If you can help with this important work or would like more information about it, please contact Phil Price at 510.909.8863 or phil@creekcats.com.

PROTECTING BIRDS IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

At Golden Gate Audubon's invitation and with support from the San Francisco Planning Department, Dr. Christine Sheppard from the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) presented information on bird-friendly building standards to the planning commissioners in early October. Architects and planners are familiar with LEED certification, but LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards do not currently encompass impacts on wildlife.

An estimated 100 million birds die annually in the United States when they collide with the glass windows of buildings. According to ABC, this figure, believed to be low, exceeds the avian mortality caused by collisions with other structures: 31 million with building lights, 10.7 million with vehicles and roads, 10 million with power lines, 4 million with towers, and 88,000 with wind turbines.

Studies have analyzed ways to make windows visible to birds through the use of louvers or patterned, painted (especially during migration), or fritted glass. Although many bird species see ultraviolet, glass that is entirely ultraviolet does not prevent collisions. Buildings pose other dangers. Green roofs, those with landscaping, attract birds to the vicinity of glass windows. Ducks have nested on green roofs, and their young face injury or death when dropping to the pavement below or unable to access a nearby body of water.

The planning commissioners appreciated Dr. Sheppard's presentation and encouraged San Francisco planner Craig Nikitas to work with Golden Gate Audubon, architects, glass manufacturers, and other experts on a bird-friendly building policy.

GGA PREPARES COMMENTS ON WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

In November, the Lennar Corporation released the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the proposed project for Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Point in San Francisco. The plans include 10,500 units of housing; a ferry terminal; office, retail, and entertainment space; a hotel; and a possible stadium. Golden Gate Audubon is preparing comments on issues covered in the DEIR, among them the cleanup of toxics on the site and in the surrounding waters; the need for parks and open space for both the existing community and new residents; and the possible construction of a bridge over Yosemite Slough. Golden Gate Audubon has long opposed the bridge, which would harm the Yosemite Creek watershed and its wildlife.

DOCENTS READY TO HIT THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL

In late October, docents began attending training sessions for our new Birding the Bay Trail program, focusing on the section of the trail between the Richmond Marina and the Albany mudflats. Representatives from our partner organizations gave presentations about their important work along this section of the Bay Trail and the area's fascinating history. The representatives came from a range of organizations: National Park Service, Trails for Rich-

mond Action Committee, UC Berkeley, Tetra Tech, The Watershed Project, East Bay Regional Park District, Friends of Five Creeks, and Citizens for East Shore Parks. Now that the training has wrapped up, docents will set up birding stations at key spots along the trail, inviting people not only to see the birds up close but also to find out more about this part of west Contra Costa County. Keep your eye on the field trips page, where we will post docent days along the trail. This new program is supported by TogetherGreen, a partnership of National Audubon and Toyota.

JOIN A CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Meet other birders and wildlife enthusiasts on your side of the bay and find out about GGA projects in your community. The East Bay Conservation Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month. For time and location, contact committee chair Phil Price (phil@creekcats.com) or GGA Conservation Director Mike Lynes (mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org). The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way (www.randallmuseum.org). Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge meets the third Monday of the month. For time and location, contact cochair Leora Feeney (leoraalameda@att.net).

Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Saturday, December 5, 9 a.m. – noon

Harding Park, San Francisco. Come out for our monthly workdays at Harding Park, part of our TogetherGreen Volunteer Days. This is our only planting day at the park, so don't miss out! Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd. at the statue. Refreshments provided.

Sunday, December 13, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Help us prepare habitat for the breeding colony of endangered California Least Terns. Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of the former Alameda Naval Air Station. Take the Webster Tube into Alameda. From Webster St., turn right onto Atlantic Ave. and then right onto Orion St. Turn left onto W. Tower Ave., which dead-ends at Monarch St. Turn right and look left for a large beige building (Coach Specialties). Turn left at the end of the building. The refuge entrance is in the back of the parking lot.

For more information on these activities or for details on locations, please contact Jennifer Robinson Maddox, Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.

Find Your Holiday Gifts at the Nature Store

Does your holiday list include fellow birders? If it does, you'll discover just the right gift at Golden Gate Audubon's Nature Store. The store's shelves are full of new items, from modestly priced binocular harnesses and 2010 calendars with beautiful photographs of birds to a wide selection of field guides and birdsong recordings for both beginning and experienced birders. You'll find fun items such as puzzles and Audubon plush birds for kids and the Bird Lover Magnetic Poetry Kit for all ages.

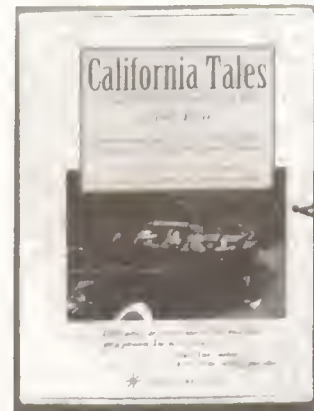
You can also surprise someone with a gift membership or even a membership renewal by using the form on page 12 or by going to our website. Golden Gate Audubon members get a 10 percent discount on all Nature Store purchases and on selected field trips. They also know that their membership supports our critical efforts to protect local wildlife and habitats and our award-winning education programs.

The Nature Store is located at the GGA office, 2530 San Pablo, suite G, Berkeley. Merchandise is also available at our Christmas Bird Count events and at our Speaker Series when programs resume in January. All proceeds go directly to support GGA programs. Stop by the store and check out the items featured here—and many others.



- *Birds of Northern California* by David Fix and Andy Bezener. More than 300 species are represented in this popular guide with illustrations, range maps, and well-written species accounts. A clever system of colored tabs for groups of birds enables users to go quickly from the contents page to the section they need.
- *The Shorebird Guide* by Michael O'Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson. Shorebirds by the thousands spend the winter throughout San Francisco Bay. This is the ideal time to study the many shorebird species—with this book as your companion. Each account compares a particular species to other similar species. Especially invaluable are photos that show variation in plumage by age and season.

- *California Tales: From the Mountains to the Sea* by Phila Rogers. This delightful boxed set by talented local author and birder extraordinaire Phila Rogers contains two small books, one on the state's natural and human history and the other on California trivia. Two accompanying CDs have five engaging stories, each reflecting a different place in the state. The set makes an excellent companion whether you are on the road or at home in a comfortable armchair.



- Accessories for optics. The Nikon microfiber cleaning cloth folds into a compact container that can be clipped to your binocular strap. The Op/Tech harness, an alternative to a conventional strap, takes the weight off your neck while keeping binoculars or a camera at the ready.
- Sibley guides. The Nature Store carries the seminal *Sibley Guide to Birds*, as well as the two small-format guides devoted to eastern and western North America. Also in stock is the new *Sibley Guide to Trees*.
- *Breeding Bird Atlas of Contra Costa County*. More than 160 species accounts by Steve Glover are accompanied by Rusty Scalf's range maps and Dana Gardner's illustrations. Reading the text and reviewing the maps will enhance your understanding of the county's birds, their preferred habitats, and their distribution.
- Golden Gate Audubon vest. The dark blue fleece vest has two zipper pockets. Available in small, medium, large, and extra-large, it is just the right garment for the Bay Area climate.
- Birdfeeders. Winter is the season to put up a birdfeeder for both resident and wintering species. The Nature Store carries thistle socks, regular seed feeders, suet cages, and hummingbird feeders. The prices on seeds, including niger thistle, black oil sunflower seeds, shelled sunflower chips, and seed mixes, compare favorably with other sources.

Special Thanks to Photographers

Each issue of *The Gull* is enlivened by a range of photographs—from those showing people participating in Golden Gate Audubon projects and events to images of birds, whether resident species or rarities. We could not produce the newsletter without the excellent images provided by many photographers.

We thank the following photographers for allowing us to publish their work over the past year: Eddie Bartley, Thomas A.

Blackman, Vern Bothwell, Eleanor Briccetti, Ted Cheeseman, Robert Chilvers, Bob Clement, Charles Denson, Mark Eaton, John Flores, Tom Grey, Jordan Hall, Ann Hutcheson-Wilcox, Lee Karney, Andrew Kleinhesselink, Bob Lewis, Calvin Lou, Patrick Maddox, Bruce Mast, Kim Meyer, Adrienne Miller, Verne Nelson, Glenn Nevill, John Poole, Phil Price, Dave Quady, Mark Rauzon, John Sterling, Noah Strycker, Glen Tepke, Noreen Weeden, and Matt Zlatunich.



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Jewel Lake

Berkeley

Friday, December 4, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

We continue our monthly first Friday trips at Tilden Regional Park. Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a 1-mile, 2-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Winter birds will have arrived, and we'll look for waterbirds on both Jewel Lake and Lake Anza. A scope would be useful for seeing lake ducks. Rain cancels.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Golden Gate Park

Sunday, December 6, 8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of the park has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds.

Mori Point

Pacific

Sunday, December 6, 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Noreen Weeden; Eddie Bartley,
eddie@naturetrip.com

Come see this relatively new and under-birded addition to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area as we explore the native coastal prairie, beach, dunes, and wetlands searching for winter birds and possibly getting a glimpse of two federally listed species that inhabit the area: the threatened Red-legged Frog and the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake. From our vantage, we'll be able to observe Sharp Park (operated by the San

Francisco Recreation and Parks Department) and discuss a visionary plan that proposes to restore and open views of this rare coastal marsh habitat to the general public (see "Creating a New National Park," page 1).

Mori Point is west of Hwy. 1 and directly south of Sharp Park. Take the Sharp Park exit off Hwy. 1 and continue south on Bradford Way about .5 mile to the gate/trailhead at Mori Point Rd. Roadside parking is limited; carpooling is encouraged. Samtrans buses #110 and #112 stop nearby. For more information, go to www.nps.gov/goga and search for Mori Point, or email the trip leaders.

Las Gallinas Sewage Treatment Ponds

Marin County

Monday, December 7, 9 a.m. – noon

Bob Lewis, bob@wingbeats.org

The open level paths around the ponds offer great viewing of the diverse birdlife both on the water and on the vegetated islands. This is often a good place for a variety of ducks, some shorebirds, blue-birds, and even a surprise or two. A variety of raptors may be seen flying overhead or hunting low over the adjacent wetlands.

From Hwy. 101 in northern San Rafael, take the Smith Ranch Rd. exit, go east to the McInnis Park entrance, and turn left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks. Meet at the parking lot at the end of the road. Bring water. Restrooms available at starting point.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, December 18, 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Brian Fitch;
Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff. For driving and transit directions, go to www.randallmuseum.org.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, December 23,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,
hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. This is another peak winter month at Lake Merritt! Come see all the regular visitors and with luck a few surprise wanderers, too.

Take the 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into the park on Perkins. Best parking is at the boathouse lot near the spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays

Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline

Oakland

Friday, January 1, 2010

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Winter high tides are a good time to see rails at the shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh, and if there has been enough rain, lots of ducks and shorebirds will be in the seasonal wetlands. Those who cannot make this trip will have another opportunity for independent viewing during high tides at Arrowhead Marsh January 28–31. Meet at the Fruitvale BART at 10:15 a.m. or at the East Creek Point trailhead at 10:30. We'll ride the San Francisco Bay Trail from East Creek Point to Damon Marsh and Arrowhead Marsh. High tide (8.2 feet) is at 11:44 a.m. Bring snacks/lunch and liquids, and dress in layers. Bicycle helmet required. Leaders will ride from Fruitvale BART to the trailhead. No reservations are necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated. BART schedules: www.transitinfo.org.

Rain cancels the bicycle trip, but we will still run the trip; in that case, go directly

to Garretson Point and meet at 10:30 a.m. We will bird this area. If the rain is light, we will walk the trail to the Arrowhead Marsh viewing platform and walk the circuit to view the seasonal wetlands. Otherwise, we will drive to Arrowhead Marsh.

East Creek Point trailhead: Exit I-880 at High St. in Oakland. Go southwest to the High Street bridge to Alameda, cross the bridge, and turn left onto Fernside. Park on street. Bike back over the bridge, turn right onto Tidewater Ave., and go .25 mi. to the East Creek Point trailhead on the right. Lesser St. is just beyond, on the left.

Arrowhead Marsh: From I-880 in Oakland, exit at Hegenberger Rd. and head west. Turn right onto Doolittle Drive (Hwy. 61) and right again onto Swan Way. Take the first left into the park and continue to the parking lot at the end of the road.

Garretson Point: From I-880 south, exit at Zhong Way/66th Ave. Turn right and go a short distance to end of road. Turn left on Oakport St., which parallels freeway, and make the first right, onto Hasser Way. Turn right on Edgewater and follow it to the Garretson Point Staging Area parking.

Palo Alto Baylands and Mountain View Shoreline

San Mateo County

Saturday, January 9, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Dan Murphy, murphsf@yahoo.com.

The wetlands, marshes, and open waters at Palo Alto and Mountain View are among the richest bird habitats on San Francisco Bay. Levees and boardwalks overlooking the marshes, mudflats, and open water make these excellent sites to view 60 to 80 species that winter in the South Bay. Ducks, shorebirds, waders, gulls, raptors, and many more make this an ideal birding experience. Meet in the parking lot on the right side of the road at the gate just

before the duck pond near the Baylands Preserve. Wear clothes appropriate for cold, wet weather. If it has been raining, wear boots or waders, as the levees can be muddy. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain will not cancel the trip.

From Hwy. 101 in Palo Alto (just south of the Dumbarton Bridge), exit at Embarcadero Rd. East. Stay to the right and be careful not to end up on the Oregon Expressway. Drive east over the freeway to the end of the street, turn left, and continue to the gate just before the duck pond.

Consumnes River

Consumnes River Preserve
Sacramento County

Sunday, January 10, 2010, 9 a.m.

Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net

The Consumnes is a small river, a mere 80 miles long, that meanders freely in the Central Valley, just south of Sacramento, along one of the remaining tracts of old-growth riparian forest left in the valley. The preserve's wetlands are extensive. We'll also find woodland birds. Meet at the preserve's visitor center on Franklin Boulevard. Dress warmly and bring lunch and liquids. Trip ends in early afternoon.

Take I-80 east to I-50 and then the I-5 (south) exit to Twin Cities Rd. (marked with a binoculars sign for wildlife viewing). This area is about midway between Stockton and Sacramento. At the Twin Cities Road exit, go east for exactly 1 mile to the first stop sign. Turn right onto Franklin Blvd. and continue for 1.7 miles. The visitor center is on the left side of Franklin. The parking lot is just past the visitor center. To view a map, go to www.consumnes.org.

Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl

Solano and Yolo Counties

Saturday, February 6, 2010,

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Terry Colborn, 916.705.8991,
tlcgdc@aol.com

The open agricultural lands of southern Solano County provide excellent foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the nearby Yolo Basin Wildlife Area are the winter home for thousands of waterfowl, including ducks, geese, swans, and many shorebirds. This trip will visit several local habitats in search of wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks; Merlin; Prairie Falcon; Burrowing, Barn, and Great-horned Owls; and Long-billed Curlew, as well as the elusive and threatened Mountain Plover. We also expect to see a representative sampling of waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area, also known as the Vic Fazio refuge. Meet at 8 a.m. in Dixon in the southwest corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot, located on East Dorset Dr. at the Hwy. 113 exit off I-80. Bring lunch and liquids; dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels.

Sacramento River Delta Boat Trip

Antioch Marina, Antioch

Saturday, February 20, 2010,

8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Join Golden Gate Audubon and Dolphin Charters on board the comfortable *Dolphinus* for a wonderful day of exploring the rich habitats and meandering channels of the Sacramento Delta. We can expect to see thousands of Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, White-fronted Goose, and Canada Goose, and myriad ducks. We will also be on the lookout for overwintering and resident raptors, as well as Great Horned Owl. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. Trip is limited to 30 participants. Cost of the trip is \$80 for Golden Gate Audubon members, \$90 for nonmembers. To reserve your space and make payment, contact Stephanie Strait, GGA Office Manager, by Friday, January 16, 2010, at 510.843.2222 or ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Participants who are confirmed on the trip will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions.

Last Chance to Sign Up for the Christmas Bird Count

If you act quickly, you may still be able to participate in one of Golden Gate Audubon's two Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Organizers are finalizing teams of birders of all levels of ability for the Oakland count on Sunday, December 20, and the San Francisco count on Tuesday, December 29. Sign-up deadlines are Monday, November 30 for the Oakland CBC, and Monday, December 7, for the San Francisco CBC. The best way to join either count or the a postcount dinner is on the GGA website: www.goldengateaudubon.org.

For additional information, contact Dave Quady at 510.704.9353 or Bob Lewis at 510.845.5001 for the Oakland CBC, or sfbirdcount@yahoo.com for the San Francisco CBC. For information on the dinner following each count, contact the Golden Gate Audubon office at 510.843.2222.



CLASSES

ALBANY ADULT SCHOOL

The following classes are held in the East Bay at the Albany Adult School. Class fees are noted on the AAS website: www.albanyadultschool.org.

Bay Area Birds

Rusty Scalf, rscaf@sonic.net; Bob Lewis, bob@wingbeats.org

Six Wednesdays, January 6 – February 10, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus five Saturday or Sunday morning field trips and one weekend trip following the last class

Waterfowl have arrived in the Central Valley, and shorebirds line our coasts. Songbirds inhabit the oaks, and winter visitors have returned from the mountains. Join an enthusiastic group to learn to identify Bay Area birds. For more details, including field trip locations and bird lists from previous years (last year's weekend trip went to Panoche Valley and Los Banos), go to instructor's website: www.wingbeats.org.

Birding by Ear

Denise Wight, blkittiwake@yahoo.com

Four Thursdays, February 4 – March 4, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, February 6 – March 6, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. (Note: No class or field trip the week of February 15.)

Birds communicate by making a variety of sounds all year long, even in the middle of winter. This class will focus on bird sounds heard at this time of the year in our area. We will learn to locate and identify birds by chips and calls and will also identify the songs of some species that are now starting to sing. For more information on Denise, go to her website: <http://blkittiwake.com>.

Beginning Bird-watching

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Four Wednesdays, February 24 – March 17, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus four Saturday field trips, February 27 – March 20, 9 – 11:30 a.m.

Winter is a time of bird abundance throughout the Bay Area and is an ideal season for beginners to get close to many species for clear viewing. Class sessions introduce bird-watching basics, including field guides, optics, and how to look at birds in order to identify them.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

The following class is offered by Golden Gate Audubon and held at the GGA office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley. To register, call 510.843.2222.

California Raptors in Winter

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com

Thursdays, January 7 and 14, 7 – 9 p.m., plus two all-day Sunday field trips, January 10 and 17 (Note: Inclement weather may cause trips to be rescheduled.)

Our mild climate with habitats rich in prey makes California an ideal destination for raptors in winter. This new class will focus on the amazing evolutionary adaptations and life histories of California's hawks, eagles, harriers, kites, and falcons. Presentations include information specific to resident, migrant, and seldom-seen vagrant raptors. On our field trips to Point Reyes and the Sacramento Delta, we'll have opportunities to view and concentrate on raptors, but we will not ignore the myriad other birds that call California home during winter.

Make Your 2010 Travel Plans

Are you eager to explore a birding hotspot outside the Bay Area? If you are, you might want to join one of the upcoming trips designed especially for Golden Gate Audubon members. For applications and detailed information on these trips, please contact Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093 or ruthsobey@gmail.com.

Harry Fuller will lead a Memorial Day weekend trip to Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon for spring migration. If you are unfamiliar with Harry, you can catch the flavor of his extensive knowledge of and enthusiasm for birds on his fascinating blog (<http://atowhee.wordpress.com>). At this major birding hotspot, spring brings wildflowers as well as a diverse assortment of nesting species, including Sandhill Cranes, Wilson's Phalarope, Swainson's Hawk, Long-billed Curlew, Chukar, Gray Partridge, Sage Grouse, Trumpeter Swan, and 15 species of waterfowl. Our group, limited to 10, will spend three days also looking for Sage Thrasher, Sage Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Short-eared Owl, Willow and Gray Flycatcher, Franklin's Gull, Black Tern,

Least Bittern, and possibly Bobolink and other eastern species. Price for this trip, still to be determined, will include a \$50 donation to Golden Gate Audubon.

In partnership with ProNatura, a Mexican conservation group, we will offer a trip to Veracruz, Mexico, for the River of Raptors migration, October 2–10. The 540 bird species in central Veracruz include 25 endemics. On a good day during fall migration, more than 100,000 migrant vultures and raptors are seen; on a Big Day, over 500,000 have been counted. An estimated 10 million passerines and waterbirds pass by each day. This tour will also go to local archaeological sites and lowland forests and coastal lagoons, as well as spend two nights in the capital city of Xalapa, a short ride into the mountains and cloud forest. We will have the option of a basic 9-day tour for \$2,100 (with 8–10 participants) or an extended tour, through October 13, to include Los Tuxtlas rain forest (if 6 participants elect to stay) for \$2,650. Prices include a \$150 donation to Golden Gate Audubon.



The SM coast has long been overlooked as a pelagic destination because of its greater distance to the continental shelf compared to departure points to the north and south. But trips out of Half Moon Bay on Oct. 11 and 18 established SM as a serious hotspot.

LOONS TO DUCKS

NAP produced just its 2nd county record for Red-necked Grebe when a bird lingered Oct. 20–25 in the Conn Cr. arm of L. Hennessey (MBe; MS, CDL, KP). Both SM pelagic trips documented 2 Laysan Albatrosses (AJ, JR, oob), but these were just warm-up birds. The Oct. 11 trip produced the season's 2nd Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) record, this one a hatch-year bird with a tracking device (AJ, oob). It hatched last spring on Torishima Island, Japan, and was one of 14 chicks that were translocated to Mukojima Island, hand-reared, and tagged as part of this season's effort to re-establish albatross breeding in the Bonin Islands.

On the 18th, sea birders set out in hopes of refinding the albatross but instead were treated to a White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) that flew up the boat wake and set down on the water to accept eager offerings of chum (AJ, JR, oob). This southern hemisphere seabird sighting is expected to be the 1st accepted N. American record.

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

October raptor migration brought 4 Northern Goshawks to the MRN Headlands and NW SF, Oct. 10–29 (PS, JC, BP, MZ, SB). The Bodega Harbor, SON, American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) remained at Doran Park through the 3rd (RSc, BL; KW, oob). Controversy swirled around a presumed juvenile Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta*), photographed and videoed Oct. 24–27 at Limantour Beach, PRNS, MRN (RSt; mob). Observers who focused on still photos favored Least Sandpiper, while those who studied video or saw the bird live favored stint. On



White-chinned Petrel observed on the October 18 pelagic trip off the San Mateo coast.

the 4th, a Franklin's Gull flew over western GGP, SF (PS). A credible report of a Craveri's Murrelet came in Oct. 3 from Campbell Cove in Bodega Bay, SON (CT).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

An evening visit to Grant Ranch, SCL, on the 20th documented a Lesser Nighthawk (FV). A Least Flycatcher made landfall at SE Farallon Island, SF, on the 9th (PRBO). A Gray Flycatcher lingered 4 days at Coyote Hills RP, ALA, starting the 4th (Scott and LT; BG). At the PRNS Lighthouse, a Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) made an appearance on the 9th (MBu, MAR, DW, KT). A calling Great Crested Flycatcher on the 16th was the month's best backyard bird in the Gerstle Park area of San Rafael, MRN (SK).

A Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) and was part of the Oct. 9 wave on SE Far-

allon Island, SF (PRBO). A Townsend's Solitaire was heard trilling on the 14th near L. Anza at Tilden RP, CC (PR). A Gray-checked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) added to the SE Farallon Island rarity list on the 9th (RT). A Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) was reported Oct. 15 from Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM, but was never refound (AG, PC).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler migration peaked the weekend of the 10th. The final month's tally included 9 Tennessee, a Virginia's, 4 Chestnut-sided, 3 Magnolia, a Cape May, 5 Black-throated Blue, a Black-throated Green, a Blackburnian, a Yellow-throated, 3 Prairie, 4 Palm, 5 Blackpoll, and 5 Black-and-white Warblers; 5 American Redstarts; 2 Ovenbirds; 2 Northern Waterthrush; and a Canada Warbler.

A PRBO scientist spotted a Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*) on Oct. 11 at SE Farallon Island, SF (JT). The bird was well described but disappeared before a camera or a 2nd observer could get to the scene. Indigo Buntings turned up on the 4th at El Polin Spring, Presidio, SF (PC), and on the 5th in Woodacre, MRN (ADM).

A flyover Bobolink caught a birder's ear in Half Moon Bay on the 2nd (AJ). Bobolinks were sighted on the 9th at SE Farallon Island (PRBO) and on the 13th at Mori Pt., SM (LG, JF). A Rusty Blackbird was ID'd in the blackbird flock at Nunes (A) Ranch, PRNS, on the 16th (RSt). Finally, a Baltimore Oriole claimed a cottonwood tree at Sunnyvale Baylands Park, SCL, on the 8th (BR, RK).

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs, the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Rod Thornton for helping compile Observations data.

Abbreviations for Observers: ADM, Al DeMartini; AG, Arnel Guanlao; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; BG, Brad Graham; BL, Bob Lewis; BP, Bob Power; BR, Bob Reiling; CDL, Calvin D Lou; CT, Colin Talcroft; DW, David Wimpfheimer; EDB, Ed DeBellevue; FV, Frank Vanslager; JC, Josiah Clark; JF, Jeff Fairclough; JR, Jennifer Rycenga; JT, Jim Tietz; KH, Keith Hansen; KP, Kathy Parker; KT, Kevin Thomas; KW, Ken Wilson; LG, Laurie Graham; LT, Linda Terrill; MAR, MaryAnn Rotella; MBe, Murray Berner; MBu, Mark Butler; MS, Mike Stanley; MZ, Matt Zlatunich; PC, Peter Colasanti; PR, Phila Rogers; PS, Paul Saraceni; RK, Roland Kenner; RSc, Rusty Scalf; RSt, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ryan Terrill; SB, Steve Bauer; SK, Sarah Klobas; ST, Scott Terrill

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; CP, County Park, Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; Lake, MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount, N., North; NAP, Napa, NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRBO, Pt Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point, Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD from page 1

from this important contribution to environmental education." Noting that the Eco-Education Programs also received the 2008 Governor's Environment and Economic Leadership Award, Welther remarked that "this award reaffirms the national importance of teaching environmental stewardship to today's students, particularly those in neighborhoods most impacted by pollution."

Together, the Eco-Oakland and Eco-Richmond Programs reached over 500 students and 1,500 family members in the 2008–09 school year. Program participants had the opportunity to learn about their local environment and actively restore stretches of bay shoreline habitat along the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline and North Richmond shoreline. Golden Gate Audubon will continue to provide East Bay families with these important stewardship opportunities and is looking forward to expanding its Eco-Education Programs to the San Francisco community next school year.

NEW NATIONAL PARK from page 1

property to, or developing a joint management agreement with, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The National Park Service has experience managing federally listed species and public access to sensitive natural areas. Sharp Park offers a great opportunity for increasing public access to this beautiful site while also creating a wildlife corridor with adjacent Mori Point, which is managed by the National Park Service.

Support for a new national park at Sharp Park is growing not only among conservationists, but also among budget hawks. Last year's Golf Course Task Force report suggested that at least \$12 million in capital improvements are needed to maintain Sharp Park as a golf course. Operating at 45 percent capacity, Sharp Park is projected to continue to lose at least \$2 million between now and 2012. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has placed a recycled water project for Sharp Park on hold pending a decision on the future of the site. The cost of the recycled water project is \$5 million. If the wetlands are restored at Sharp Park, these funds could be saved or used for other purposes. If the golf course is to continue at this site, another project estimated at \$32 million is required for seawall improvements. If the site is returned to a wetland, a smaller seawall project would be needed, since the natural dune and wetland habitat would be restored.

The opportunity to restore the land and create a better public park at Sharp Park is now. If we fail, we may not get another chance to recover the San Francisco Garter Snake, the most beautiful and imperiled serpent in North America. Moreover, habitat protection and improvements made on behalf of the listed species will also have significant benefits for other species of native wildlife and plants.

Please check the Golden Gate Audubon website for action you can take in support of closing this golf course and transferring Sharp Park to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area as our newest national park. Join Eddie Bartley and Noreen Weeden for a field trip to Mori Point in Pacifica and a chance to see Sharp Park. The trip begins at 8 a.m. on Sunday, December 6. For details and directions, see Field Trips, page 6.

GGA's Wish List

Golden Gate Audubon is soliciting the following items: video and still cameras, binoculars, telescopes, and a vehicle to transport tools and equipment to restoration sites. Please contact Kevin E. Consey at kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org.

East Bay Office for Rent

Golden Gate Audubon is seeking a compatible tenant for a 200-square-foot space within its own offices in Berkeley. The rent is \$400 per month. Perfect for private law or consulting business. Shared wireless Internet. For more information, please contact Kevin E. Consey at 510.843.2222.

A Message from Our Treasurer and Chief Operating Officer

Golden Gate Audubon owes its financial viability, and thereby its programmatic success, to the continued generosity of its members and donors. This is evident when looking at the statement of activities.

Despite the global financial crisis and the deep recession in California, we raised \$521,812 from the public, \$62,580 more than last year. In particular, our investment in seeking federal, state, and private grant support for our projects bore fruit, yielding \$81,904 more than last year.

Expenses last year increased by \$117,885. With those funds, we increased our volunteer coordinator's work to full time; engaged a part-time conservation project manager to coordinate our projects in San Francisco; and expanded our Eco-Education Programs to Richmond. We also launched a community program in Richmond with assistance from TogetherGreen, a partnership of National Audubon and Toyota.

Despite impressive gains in several income categories, the total amount was less than we had anticipated raising, and our operating income totals fell short of goal. For the year ending June 30, 2009, our net assets decreased \$273,619. This was the combination of investment losses of \$119,156 and an operating loss of \$154,463.

We spent \$611,369, almost 75 percent of our annual operating budget, directly on conservation, education, and member services last year.

As we enter FY 2010, our contributions to date remain robust, and many of our investments have recovered from the severe markdown of 2008–09.

—Al Peters, Treasurer, and
Kevin E. Consey, Chief Operating Officer

Golden Gate Audubon Statement of Activities

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2009 AND 2008

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	2009 Combined Total	2008 Combined Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE					
Public Support					
Direct Contributions					
Gifts and Donations	135,988	40,120	0	176,108	193,445
Grants	20,000	320,961	0	340,961	259,057
Total Direct Contributions	155,988	361,081	0	517,069	452,502
Indirect Contributions					
Earth Share	4,743	0	0	4,743	6,730
Total Public Support	160,731	361,081	0	521,812	449,232
REVENUE					
Membership Dues	96,633	0	0	96,633	103,437
Investment Earnings	-119,156	0	0	-119,156	-33,525
Merchandise Sales	4,165	0	0	4,165	2,328
Lawsuit Settlement Proceeds	46,637	0	0	46,637	50,000
Other	0	0	0	0	502
Total Revenue	28,279	0	0	28,279	122,742
Total Public Support and Revenue	189,010	361,081	0	550,091	581,974
Net Assets Released from Restriction	356,288	-356,288	0	0	0
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES					
Program Services:					
Conservation	219,519	0	0	219,519	223,673
Education Programs	222,605	0	0	222,605	167,632
Member Services	169,245	0	0	169,245	180,869
Management and General	108,459	0	0	108,459	65,949
Fundraising	99,089	0	0	99,089	62,909
Total Expenses	818,917	0	0	818,917	701,032
Change in Net Assets	-273,619	4,793	0	-268,826	-119,058
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	718,233	55,543	55,224	829,000	948,058
Net Assets at End of Year	444,614	60,336	55,224	560,174	829,000

Complete audited financial statements are available from the Golden Gate office or at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

GOLDEN EAGLE (\$1,000 OR MORE)

Anonymous (2), Earthshare, Julia Miller

PEREGRINE FALCON (\$500 TO \$999)

Al & Barbara Peters

HASTY TEEN (\$200 TO \$499)

Donald Bird & David Young, Anna Payne

FLAPPER BIRD (\$100 TO \$199)

Mary Cantrell, Philip Erickson, Akesa Fakava, Alison Garvin, Calvin & Lucy Lou, Elizabeth Varnhagen, Jeffrey Watts & Meredith Jones Watts

GIFTS TO \$99

Marcelle Baxter, F. Choy, Rose & Robert Craig, Thelma & Jonathan Dixon,

Stephen Hahn, Naomi Kikuchi, Jon & Ina Lockwood, Lila Martin, Suzanne Radford, Shirley Woo & David Rosenfeld, Douglas Young

REWARD DONATIONS

Marjorie Blackwell (printer); Margaret Colbert, Berkeley Horticultural Nursery (birdfeeder trays); Saintsbury Winery (Paul Bannick event); Rich Walking, Restoration Design Group (scanner)

UNRECORDED GIFTS

Morgan Stanley, in support of Susan Consey

EMPLOYEE GIFT MATCH

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Give a Holiday Gift that Helps Local Wildlife

This holiday season, present your nature-loving friends and family members with a Supporting Membership in Golden Gate Audubon—a gift they will enjoy the whole year. If the recipient is already a member, consider making a donation in his or her name.

PLEASE SELECT A MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- ☐ Individual
\$35
- ☐ Family
\$50
- ☐ I would like to include a donation to support GGA’s conservation, education, and birding programs.

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Donation \$ _____

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Your contributions to Golden Gate Audubon are fully tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

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PAYMENT INFORMATION

- ☐ My check, payable to **Golden Gate Audubon Society**, is enclosed.
- ☐ Please charge my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

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☐ Please do not share these names with any other organization.

To complete your gift, send in the form, contact us at 510.843.2222, or go to our website www.goldengateaudubon.org.